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AUTHOR Mizell, M. Hayes
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ABSTRACT

A risk assessment instrument for identifying potential dropouts at the middle and high school levels and an accompanying explanation of the instrument are provided in this document. The instrument provides a checklist of 21 criteria; the more criteria the student meets, the greater his risk of dropping out. Criteria include age in comparison to grade; standarized test performance; retention history; subject failure; tardiness, truancy, and excessive absences history; suspension/expulsion history; delinquency; handicapping condition without employability development services; lack of pre-college or vocational education course sequence; inadequate projected units to graduate with class; non-participation in extracurricular activities; previous classification as a dropout; drug use; pregnancy/parenthood; living in household receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children; living outside two-parent home situation; and having parents and/or siblings who did not graduate from high school. It is noted that the instrument has not been validated. (ABL)

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A Guide for the Identification of a Student Meriting Special Dropout Prevention Initiatives

[To be completed during Spring, 1987]

(This form is a guide for any teacher, counselor, administrator, or youth worker to use in identifying a student who may be at risk of dropping out of school. This is not intended to be a scientific instrument or an absolute predictor of whether a student will drop out of school. Rather, it is to be used to document that a student is experiencing a combination of problems that merit the special attention of administrators, teachers, counselors, and community agencies. When a student meets three or more of the criteria numbered 1 - 21 below this indicates the student may be at risk of dropping out of school. The more criteria the student meets the the greater the risk the student may drop out. When a student is so identified, this should, at a minimum, trigger: (1) a meeting of all adults who routinely work with the student; and (2) their careful assessment of whether the student is, in fact, at risk of dropping out of school. If it is determined the student is at risk of dropping out school, priority should be given to (3) taking action to assure that the student returns to school in 1987-1988; and (4) the development and follow-up of a variety of coordinated dropout prevention strategies that will be put into effect by no later than the beginning of the 1987-1988 school year. If the student's problems are left unattended they may eventually lead to a decision by the student to leave school before graduating. It is recommended that this form be completed for any student demonstrating strong evidence of alientation, isolation, and poor performance.)

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Name of student: _____

Date of birth: _____

Current age: _____years _____months

School: _____

Grade in school: _____

Person completing this form: _____

Position: _____

Date this form was completed: _____

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PRIORITY ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO A STUDENT MEETING AT LEAST THREE OF THE CRITERIA NUMBERED 1 - 21 BELOW. CHECK ALL OF THE FOLLOWING THAT ARE KNOWN TO BE CORRECT FOR THIS STUDENT:

1. The student is currently:
   ____ 13.5 years old or older but rising to or in the 6th grade;
   ____ 14.5 years old or older but rising to or in the 7th grade;
   ____ 15.5 years old or older but rising to or in the 8th grade;
   ____ 16.5 years old or older but rising to or in the 9th grade;
   ____ 17.5 years old or older but rising to or in the 10th grade;
   ____ 18.5 years old or older but rising to or in the 11th grade;
   ____ 19.5 years old or older but rising to or in the 12th grade.

2. ____ In bottom quartile on ___BSAP or ___CTBS reading tests in 1986.

3. ____ Did not pass the reading portion of the BSAP 10th grade "exit exam" in the Spring of 1986.

4. ____ Was not promoted to the next grade at the end of a previous school year. Grade? _____ Year?_____

5. ____ Failed at least two of the following subjects for the year in 1985-1986: ___English, ___math, ___social studies, ___science.

6. ____ Failed at least two of the following subjects during one or more grading periods in 1986-1987: ___English, ___math, ___social studies, ___science.

7. ____ Was ___tardy for first period class five or more times, or ___cut at least one class five or more times in 1986-1987.

8. ____ Determined by school officials to be a truant in 1986-1987.

9. ____ Will not receive credit for at least one course in 1986-1987 because of excessive absences from school. Course(s)?_____

10. ____ Suspended from school for five or more days in 1986-1987.

11. ____ Expelled from school in any previous school year.

12. ____ Has been referred to Family Court and/or the Department of Youth Services during the previous twelve months.

13. ____ Rising to or in grade 10, 11, or 12 and has a handicapping condition but is not scheduled to receive employability development services from any agency.
    Type of handicap? _____

14. ____ Rising to or in grade 10, 11, or 12 but is not enrolled in any vocational education sequence, nor in a sequence of pre-college courses, nor in a ROTC program.

15. ____ Rising to or in grade 10, 11, or 12 but based on units earned to date, and/or BSAP performance, it is projected that the student will not graduate with the class in which he/she is currently enrolled.

16. ____ Is not an active member of at least one school sponsored extracurricular organization.

17. ____ Is not participating in at least one school sponsored extracurricular activity solely because the student did not meet grade requirements established by school board policy.

18. ____ Has previously been classified as a dropout. Year?_____

19. ____ Has violated school board policy or has been arrested for possession, use, or distribution of controlled substances.

20. ____ Is pregnant. Married?_____

21. ____ Is the parent of one or more children. Number? _____

22. ____ Resides in household receiving AFDC payments.

23. ____ Lives with either: one biological parent, a guardian, or in a foster home or group home.

25. ____ At least one parent/guardian with whom the student resides did not graduate from high school.

26. ____ Has one or more siblings who did not graduate from high school.

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February 11, 1987

To: Persons Interested in Dropout Prevention

From: M. Hayes Mizell
Coordinator
State Employment Initiatives
for Youth Demonstration Project
TEC Job Training Division
1300 Pickens Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201
734-8942

I have developed the enclosed form to enable teachers, counselors, administrators, and youth workers to assemble objective data that may indicate a student is at risk of dropping out of school. The form is an effort to move beyond general discussions about the need for early identification and intervention, and to provide a specific means for identifying individual students who may be potential dropouts.

This instrument has not been field tested nor validated. The causes of dropouts are varied and complex and it is unlikely it will ever be possible to develop an instrument that will be one hundred percent effective in predicting whether a student will drop out of school. However, I encourage researchers and academicians to improve on this instrument.

Reports of research and the experiences of educators and youth workers have established some consensus about factors which seem to have a positive correlation to students' decisions to withdraw from school before graduating. The enclosed form incorporates these factors.

The form provides a mechanism, and suggests a process, for identifying students who are affected by circumstances that may cause them to decide to drop out of school. The suggested process is intended to supplement, rather than to supplant, dropout prevention initiatives designed to effect system change, or targeted to certain groups of students.

The form can be used for students at both the middle and high school levels. While most dropouts occur during the ninth and tenth grades, many educators and youth workers believe it is important to identify potential dropouts during grades 6-8. For that reason, the use of this form at early grade levels is recommended.

The form is designed to be used in the Spring of 1987 to identify students who should receive special attention to make sure they return to school in 1987-1988. These students should also be the target of dropout prevention strategies throughout the 1987-1988 school year and, if necessary, beyond.

While the form is designed for use in South Carolina it can be easily adapted to fit local circumstances anywhere in the nation. It can also be adapted to reflect your own philosophy or experience. Practioners are encouraged to improve the form and evaluate the effects of its use. The important thing is for schools and youth workers to have and use some insrument which will systematically focus attention and prevention strategies on individual students.